

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

RSR-01 /103 W

----- 049485

R 242245Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0646

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 4119

E.O. 11652: XGDS(1)

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, VE, CU

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE ON CUBA

REF: STATE 167891

DEPUTY ASST SEC SHLAUDEMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUGGESTION MADE REFTTEL, I CALLED ON FONMIN ARENALES THIS MORNING TO REITERATE OUR ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE ON CUBA, STRESSING OUR VIEWS ON THE JURIDICAL UNSOUNDNESS OF THE MEASURE, AND ASKED THAT GUATEMALA CONSIDER VOTING "NO" IF IT IS PRESENTED TO THE PERMANENT COUNCIL.

.2. ARENALES REITERATED HIS POSITION THAT HE DID NOT WANT GUATEMALA TO TAKE THE LEAD IN FIGHTING THE RESOLUTION OR TO PUT ITSELF TOO FIRMLY IN THE "OPPOSED" COLUMN. HE REITERATED HIS REASONS FOR THIS TANCE--(1) THIS IS AN ELECTION YEAR AND HE DID NOT WANT TO GIVE THE
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GOG'S LEFTIST OPPONENTS AN ISSUE IN THIS MATTER; (2) HE

DID NOT WANT TO OPEN THE PANDORA'S BOX OF THE BAY OF PIGS AND GUATEMALA'S ASSISTANCE TO US (FINCA HELVETIA) IN THAT OPERATION; AND (3) A NEW FACTOR--HE BELIEVED THAT HONDURAS' "INCONCEIVABLE" ACTION IN PURCHASING SUGAR FROM CUBA IN DEFIANCE OF THE SANCTIONS WOULD HAVE GREAT LOCAL IMPACT HERE AND IN OTHER CA COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION HE DID CONCEDE THAT THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE WAS PATENTLY UNSOUND FROM A JURIDICAL POINT OF VIEW AND STATED THAT GUATEMALA'S POSITION WOULD BE THE FOLLOWING: HE WILL STRONGLY SUPPORT A PROCEDURAL MOTION STIPULATING THAT ANY ACTION ON THE VENEZUELAN RESOLUTION MUST BE TAKEN BY A 2/3 MAJORITY, AS SPECIFIED IN THE ORIGINAL O/C RESOLUTION. HE SAID HE DID NOT WANT GUATEMALA TO PRESENT THIS PROCEDURAL MOTION, AND SUGGESTED THAT WE DO IT OURSELVES OR INDUCE ANOTHER COUNTRY TO DO SO. IF THIS MOTION FAILS AND AN ATTEMPT IS MADE TO PUSH THROUGH THE VENEZUELAN RESOLUTION BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY, GUATEMALA WILL VOTE "NO." IF, HOWEVER, A MOTION PROVIDING THAT THE RESOLUTION MUST BE CARRIED BY A 2/3 MAJORITY IS APPROVED, GUATEMALA WOULD MUCH PREFER TO ABSTAIN ON THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE. HOWEVER, HE NOTED IF IN OUR OPINION IT IS "ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL" THAT GUATEMALA CAST A NEGATIVE VOTE HE WILL DO SO. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT WE MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY GIVING HIM REASONS FOR THE "ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALITY" OF A NEGATIVE VOTE, SINCE HE MAINTAINS THAT HIS ABSTENTION, FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, IS AS GOOD AS A "NO" VOTE WITH REGARD TO BLOCKING THE PASSAGE OF THE RESOLUTION. I AGREED WITH HIM ON THE JURIDICAL EFFECT BUT POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A SHIFT IN VOTE WOULD BE MIS-INTERPRETED AS A SLACKENING IN GUATEMALA'S OPPOSITION TO THE CASTRO REGIME.

3. ARENALES INFORMALLY GAVE ME COPY OF GOG RESPONSE TO VENEZUELAN AIDE MEMOIRE. IT IS A PRETTY WAFFLED DOCUMENT, WHICH SAYS IN ITS SUBSTANTIVE PARAGRAPHS: "THE GOVERNMENT, RESPECTFUL OF ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, HAS AND WILL CONTINUE TO COMPLY STRICTLY WITH THE DISPOSITIONS OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE NINTH MEETING OF CONSULTATION OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, AS LONG AS THAT RESOLUTION CONTINUES IN FORCE" AND "WITH RELATION TO THE INITIATIVE

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OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA...THE GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA ABSTAINS FROM PRONOUNCING FOR OR AGAINST IT." ARENALES NOTED THAT THE FIRST PARAGRAPH, RELATING TO CONTINUED ADHERENCE TO THE RESOLUTION, WAS NOTICE TO GOV THAT GOG WOULD INSIST ON TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY VOTE TO EFFECT ANY CHANGES IN RESOLUTION.

4. I DO NOT BELIEVE A CALL FROM GENERAL SOMOZA TO

ARANA WOULD BE PARTICULARLY FRUITFUL UNDER THE CIRCUM-
STANCES, AND COULD GIVE RISE TO THE FEELING ON THE PART OF
ARENALES THAT WE ARE USING SOMOZA TO ATTEMPT TO PUT ADDI-
TIONAL PRESSURE ON THE GOG. HE UNDERSTANDS STRONG PRESSURE
DIRECTLY FROM US BUT WOULD RESENT OUR USE OF THIRD PARTIES.
BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS INTERRUPTION, SUGAR, PROCUREMENT, EMBARGOES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973GUATEM04119
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 BOWDLER
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730818/aaaaampp.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 167891
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <01 MAR 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE ON CUBA
TAGS: PFOR, VE, CU, GT, OAS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005